

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01
INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15
USIA-06 AID-05 COME-00 EB-08 FRB-03 TRSE-00
XMB-02 OPIC-03 LAB-04 SIL-01 OMB-01 CEA-01 STR-07
AGRE-00 /106 W

-----098282 190422Z /75

R 180934Z FEB 78
FM USINT BAGHDAD
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5700
INFO USDOC WASHDC
AMEMBASSY ANKARA
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: ETRD, PEPR, SY, TU, IZ
SUBJECT: SYRIAN "ECONOMI BLOCKAGE" OF IRAQ

REF: BAGHDAD 176

1. AS PART OF THE GENERAL ANTI-SYRIAN PROPAGANDA
CAMPAGIN RESUMED ABOUT TWO WEEKS AGO, THE IRAQI PRESS
HAS PUBLISHED SEVERAL ARTICLES CHARGING SYRIA
WITH CARRYING OUT A "VIRTUAL ECONOMIC BLOCKAGE" OF IRAQ. IN
ADDITION TO THE RAIL STOPPAGE REPORTED IN REFTTEL, THE ARTICLES
ALLEGE THAT THE SYRIANS HAVE NOW BLOCKED IRAQI-BOUND ROAD
TRAFFIC CAUSING A BUILD-UP OF 3,000 TRUCKS ON THE TURKISH-
SYRIAN BORDER AND ABOUT 1,000 TRUCKS ON THE IRAQI-
SYRIAN BORDER. THE SYRIAN GOVERNMENT HAS ALSO ALLEGEDLY
CONFISCATED IRAQI GOODS AT SYRIAN AND LEBANESE PORTS.

2. THE ARTICLES PROCLAIM THAT THE GOI HAS, WITH THE
COOPERATION OF THE TURKISH GOVERNMENT, FOILED THIS ATTEMPT
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AT ECONOMIC SABOTAGE. THEY REPORT THAT, IN ADDITION TO
ASSISTING WITH THE FORWARDING OF THE FRUSTRATED CARGO
TO IRAQI DESTINATIONS, THE TURKS HAVE FORMALLY PROTESTED
THE BLOCKAGES TO THE SYRIAN GOVERNMENT.

3. COMMENT. ARTICLES IN EFFECT CHRONICLE EVENTS WHICH
HAVE TAKEN PLACE OVER THE PAST SEVERAL YEARS, ATTRIBUTING

ALL TO SYRIAN MENDACITY. THE IRAQI GOVERNMENT PROHIBITED SHIPMENT OF GOODS THROUGH LEBANESE PORTS WHEN THE FIGHTING IN LEBANON INTENSIFIED IN 1975, AND THROUGH SYRIAN PORTS IN EARLY 1977, FOR REASONS NOT ANNOUNCED AT THE TIME. SYRIA HAS INTERMITTENTLY BLOCKED THE TRANSIT OF ROAD TRAFFIC AT LEAST SINCE APRIL 1976 WHEN THE GOI CUT OFF CRUDE DELIVERIES THROUGH THE SYRIAN PIPELINE TO THE LEBANESE MEDITERRANEAN TERMINALS.

4. TURKISH EMBASSY OFFICER CONFIRMS THAT GOT ABOUT SIX WEEKS AGO PROTESTED BLOCKAGE TO THE SYRIAN GOVERNMENT. ACCORDING TO DIPLOMATIC COLLEAGUES, TRUCK DRIVERS TRANSPORTING THE FRUSTRATED CARGO REPORT THAT THE TURKISH AUTHORITIES ARE SEARCHING THE VEHICLES THOROUGHLY FOR CONTRABAND AT SEVERAL POINTS EN ROUTE TO IRAQ.
PECK

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: PROPAGANDA, TRADE, EMBARGOES, BORDER CONTROLS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 18 feb 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978BAGHDA00354
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780076-1154
Format: TEL
From: BAGHDAD
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780238/aaaabfud.tel
Line Count: 78
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: a8f007d4-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION NEA
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 78 BAGHDAD 176
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 05 may 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: N/A
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 3550287
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: SYRIAN "ECONOMI BLOCKAGE" OF IRAQ
TAGS: ETRD, PEPR, SY, TU, IZ
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odb://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/a8f007d4-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014